

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4063

INFO AMCONSUL GUADALAJARA

AMCONSUL HERMOSILLO

AMCONSUL MONTERREY

ALL OTHER CONSULATES IN MEXICO (POUCH)

C O N F I D E N T I A L MEXICO 4419

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT PFOR MX

SUBJECT: MONTHLY POLITICAL HIGHLIGHTS--MARCH

1. SUMMARY: A PROPOSED LAW TO REGULATE PRIVATE PROPERTY USES IS CAUSING THE MOST HEATED EXCHANGES BETWEEN THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS SINCE THE GARZA SADA ASSASSINATION IN SEPTEMBER 1973. THE CONTROVERSY IS POINTING UP ONCE AGAIN DISTRUST OF PRIVATE SECTOR TOWARD THE ECHEVERRIA ADMINISTRATION AND THE NEAR PARANOIA WITH WHICH THE PRESIDENT REGARDS THE MONTERREY INDUSTRIAL GROUP. OTHER ITEMS OF INTEREST WERE RALLY OF DISSIDENT ELECTRICAL WORKERS HELD WITHOUT VIOLENCE MARCH 20, AND AMNESTY PROPOSED FOR ALL WHO WERE ARRESTED DURING 1968 STUDENT RIOTS. THE JLP PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN ROLLED ON MEANWHILE WITH ONLY A COUPLE OF INCIDENTS TO LIVEN IT UP A BIT. END SUMMARY.

2. HUMAN SETTLEMENTS LAW STIRS NEW GOM-PRIVATE SECTOR CONTROVERSY

A NEW GOM-PRIVATE SECTOR CONTROVERSY IS CURRENTLY RAGING OVER A PROPOSED LAW "TO REGULATE HUMAN SETTLEMENTS". DEFENDED BY THE ECHEVERRIA ADMINISTRATION AS LITTLE MORE THAN A ZONING

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ORDINANCE AND CONDEMNED BY THE BUSINESS SECTOR AS AN UNCON-

STITUTIONAL ATTACK ON PRIVATE PROPERTY, THE DEBATE IS GENERATING MORE HEAT THAN LIGHT. ON APRIL 1 A LONG-AWAITED PUBLIC MEETING BETWEEN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTOR TO DISCUSS THE LAW SAW PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA INAUGURATE THE SESSION WITH A DENUNCIATION OF "A SUBVERSIVE CAMPAIGN" DIRECTED FROM MONTERREY AGAINST THE LAW. THE PRESIDENT SAID A "CLANDESTINE" MEETING HAD BEEN HELD AND THAT THE IMPOSITION OF A FASCIST REGIME WAS THE GOAL OF THE GROUP. THE MONTERREY GROUP IS RESPONDING DEFENSIVELY THAT THEIR CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHT OF ASSEMBLY IS BEING ATTACKED AND IS DENYING THAT ANYTHING SUBVERSIVE WAS BEING ORCHESTRATED.

3. APPARENTLY WHAT BOTHERS THE PRIVATE SECTOR MOST IS THE LAW'S AMBIGUITY AND THE EXTENSIVE AUTHORITY IT WOULD GIVE TO MUNICIPAL AUTHORITIES TO REGULATE PRIVATE LAND USES. EMBOFF WHO RECENTLY VISITED TAMPICO AND VERACRUZ FOUND OPPOSITION FOCUSING ON LATTER ASPECT. AMCONSUL MAZATLAN REPORTS A NEW WAVE OF IMMIGRANT VISA REQUESTS FROM UPPER CLASS MEXICANS AS RESULT OF NEW INITIATIVE. PRIVATE SECTOR IS EFFECTIVELY LABELING AUTHORITY GIVEN TO MUNICIPAL OFFICIALS AS BOON TO LOCAL BOSSISM, BUT ECHEVERRIA ADMINISTRATION SEEMS DETERMINED TO PUSH LAW THROUGH LEGISLATURE. EXTRAORDINARY SESSION OF CONGRESS IS TO BE CONVENED SHORTLY TO CONSIDER THE LAW; WHETHER LAW IS PASSED WITH OR WITHOUT SUBSTANTIVE MODIFICATION REMAINS TO BE SEEN.

4. DISSIDENT ELECTRICAL WORKERS HOLD RALLY

AFTER BEING TWICE THWARTED BY GOM, THE RAFAEL GALVAN LED GROUP OF DISSIDENT ELECTRICAL WORKERS HELD MARCH 20 RALLY ATTENDED BY LARGE TURNOUT OF LEFTIST ORGANIZATIONS. GOM ONCE AGAIN ATTEMPTED TO COUNTER EFFECT OF DISSIDENT RALLY BY HAVING PRI/CTM HOLD ITS OWN AND USING CTM RALLY AS PRETEXT FOR DENYING DISSIDENT GROUP PERMISSION TO MARCH TO CENTER OF TOWN. 27,000 ARMY TROOPS AND RIOT POLICE WERE EITHER PATROLLING OR ON ALERT TO PREVENT ANY POSSIBLE VIOLENCE. NONE OCCURRED. EMBOFFS WHO MIXED IN BOTH MEETINGS FOUND ATTENDANCE SLIGHTLY LARGER AT CTM RALLY BUT ENTHUSIASM LACKING. DISSIDENT MEETING IN CONTRAST WENT ON FOR SEVERAL HOURS. CONCERN OF GOVERNMENT SEEMS TO BE THAT GALVAN IS PROVIDING LEFTIST OPPOSITION WITH UNIFYING CAUSE, A DEVELOPMENT

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WHICH GOVERNMENT ATTEMPTS TO STOP RALLY PROBABLY HAVE ABETTED.

5. ECHEVERRIA PROPOSES AMNESTY FOR 1968 RIOT PARTICIPANTS

AFTER MEXICAN APPEALS COURT TOOK ACTION MAKING 1968 RIOT PARTICIPANTS SUBJECT TO REAPPREHENSION, PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA QUICKLY DEFUSED RESULTING CONTROVERSY BY ANNOUNCING PROPOSED AMNESTY LEGISLATION FOR ALL ARRESTED IN CONNECTION WITH THE RIOTS. THE COURT'S ACTION WAS ACTUALLY TAKEN MARCH 19

AND COMMUNICATED TO THOSE AFFECTED MORNING OF MARCH 20, WHEN SEVERAL WERE PREPARING TO PARTICIPATE IN DISSIDENT ELECTRICAL WORKERS' RALLY. THE TRANSPARENTLY POLITICAL TIMING OF THE ACTION CAUSED REACTION WHICH PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA QUICKLY DEFUSED BY PROPOSING AMNESTY LEGISLATION. THE 180 DEGREE TURNABOUT COULD HAVE BEEN PROMPTED BY NEGATIVE PUBLIC REACTION; ANOTHER POSSIBILITY (PURELY SPECULATION) IS THAT COURT'S ACTION MAY HAVE BEEN TAKEN WITHOUT ECHEVERRIA'S KNOWLEDGE IN RESPONSE TO CONCERNS OF GOM SECURITY OFFICIALS. UPSHOT IS FOR MEXICO FINALLY TO PUT 1968 BEHIND IT.

6. PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN

A. LOPEZ PORTILLO--WINDING UP A THREE WEEK CAMPAIGN TRIP THROUGH GULF COAST STATES PRI PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE LOPEZ PORTILLO HAD TWO HEATED ENCOUNTERS WITH LOCAL STUDENTS. JLP LOST HIS TEMPER ON COUPLE OF OCCASIONS BUT APPARENTLY WAS FORTHRIGHT AND HONEST WITH THE STUDENTS. HE RETURNED TO MEXICO CITY FOR NINE DAYS CAMPAIGNING AND IS NOW IN STATE OF TAMAULIPAS. BEFORE LEAVING, HE ECHOED PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA'S CONDEMNATION OF THE "SUBVERSIVE CAMPAIGN" (SEE ITEM ON HUMAN SETTLEMENTS LAW) BY CRITICIZING OPPOSITION TO LAW OF "KLU KLUX KLANISTAS".

G. PAN--HAVING FAILED TO NOMINATE A PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE, THE OPPOSITION PARTY OF NATIONAL ACTION HAS BEEN SLOW TO NAME SENATORIAL AND CONGRESSIONAL CANDIDATES FOR THE JULY 4 ELECTIONS. CANDIDATES ARE REGISTERED IN ONLY 20 OF THE FEDERAL DISTRICT'S 27 DISTRICTS; IN YUCATAN NO CANDIDATES ARE REGISTERED. THE SLOWNESS IS RESULT OF SAME INTERNAL SQUABBLING WHICH PREVENTED PAN FROM NOMINATING PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE. ON MARCH 25 PABLO EMILIO MADERO OF THE CONCHELLO FACTION ANNOUNCED HIS "INDEPENDENT" CANDIDACY FOR THE PRESIDENCY, WHICH IS LIKELY TO AGGRAVATE PAN'S INFIGHTING MORE THAN IT WILL AFFECT THE NATIONAL PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN. CONFIDENTIAL

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